



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20224

May 9, 2000

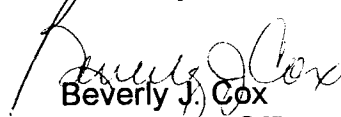
TO ALL PROSPECTIVE OFFERORS:

Request for Proposal (RFP) TIRNO-00-R-00006

Attached are questions submitted in preparation for the pre-proposal conference held 5/9/00 and answers furnished. Additional questions and answers presented at the conference will be forthcoming.

If you have any questions, please contact the undersigned via e-mail at beverly.j.cox@irs.gov or FAX to 202-283-1514.

Sincerely,


Beverly J. Cox
Contracting Officer

Enclosure

**PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
TO TIRNO-00-R-00006**

1. Does the IRS intend for vendors to form their own consortium and bid as a consortium or may they respond individually.

ANS: It is at the offeror's discretion on how it determines it best can satisfy the government's requirements.

2. Can a bidder be a member of more than one consortium?

ANS: Yes, it just means the offeror is affiliated with others to satisfy the requirement.

3. Will the IRS manage the consortium or will consortium members designate management?

ANS: Yes. The consortium contracts will be administered by a contracting officer (paragraph G.1.1 of RFP) and have a designated Contracting Officer's Representative (to be determined). Section G of the RFP details the authorities and limitations of these individuals. Individual task orders will have sub-COTRs designated. It is expected the contractor will have a designated project manager (required fill-in on page 31, Paragraph G.1.3 of RFP).

4. Does the IRS anticipate that the consortium will change over time (e.g., recruiting additional members for the consortium in the future)?

ANS: Presently there are no plans to change the consortium once awarded. Should the IRS identify additional program areas, they will be competed in the same manner.

5. Reference item C.2.3, what is the definition of "accredited?"

ANS: Accredited is recognition by the American Council on Education via the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) of those institutions that have been evaluated by the recognized accreditors and have been determined by their peers to meet acceptable levels of educational quality. Accreditors or listed in the current edition of "Accredited Institutions of Post Secondary Education."

6. What accreditation bodies are acceptable?

ANS: For evaluation purposes, the recognized authority is the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. See No. 5 above.

7. Are there contractual/confidentiality agreements needed for members of the consortium?

ANS: Notwithstanding the rights provided the contractor under the Data Rights clauses included in Section I, specific restrictions or confidentiality requirements will be addressed on an individual task order basis.

8. Is the consortium considered to be one where all content is shared across all members, or where members provide their content directly to the IRS, but other skills and knowledge are shared across the consortium?

ANS: Yes, see paragraph C.3 of RFP.

9. What does IRS expect the vendor to provide in each area? Developing a program and running the program?

ANS: For each program area, any and all tasks listed in paragraph C.4.2 and as further defined by individual task orders.

10. Will consortium members be required to train IRS via “train the trainer” activities?

ANS: Yes, if the required deliverable under individual task orders. Train the trainer or similar activities are included under Task M in paragraph C.4.2 of the RFP. The associated line item is 0009 and corresponding line item in the option years.

11. Reference page 53, SBA SIC Code 8221. Is SIC Code 8742 also acceptable?

ANS: Yes, if the requirements of the solicitation can be met.

12. Is the IRS open to vendors proposing on individual items A-Q (p. 16) or is the focus to propose on Program Areas 1 – 11 (.pp. 19-22)?

ANS: No, the vendor’s proposal should demonstrate its ability to perform A-Q for a particular program area. More than one program area may be offered by one vendor.

13. Will all consortium members be required to meet IRS physical security and safeguard standards?

ANS: Yes (See paragraph H.1 of RFP) “...any contractor or subcontractor at any tier” receiving information as detailed in this clause.

14. The RFP indicates that amendments will be posed on the IRS website. Will we receive notification of the posting either electronically or by telephone?

ANS: No, it is the vendor’s responsibility to check the website. See paragraph 2 of cover letter to RFP.

15. The RFP indicates that awards will be issued by program area. Does the IRS have a ceiling on the total number of vendors who will be awarded work under this solicitation?

ANS: It is possible for one vendor to receive an award for more than one program area. However, only one vendor will be awarded a contract for a particular program area. Thus, it is possible to have 11 contracts awarded under this RFP.

16. How does the IRS plan to align the reorganization and potential resultant competency changes with this solicitation?

ANS: See paragraph C.5.7. Changes will be made via modification in accordance with the changes clauses cited in Section I of the RFP.

17. Who is responsible for training materials costs?

ANS: Training material costs associated with any line item in Section B should be included in the line item price.

18. Will IRS provide a final Bid List based on the elimination of those who did not respond to being maintained on the original Bid List? If so, when will it be available?

ANS: Yes. It will be attached to the responses to the questions.

19. When will IRS provide a list of all the questions asked and the answers for the pre-proposal conference? If so, when will the list be available?

ANS: Answers to questions posed will be provided in writing after the pre-proposal conference.

20. Why was RFP issued when many of the courses that may be developed are available through existing contracts, GSA schedules, etc?

ANS: The consortium is more than course-vendoring arrangement. See paragraph C.3 of the RFP.

21. What does the IRS expect to be accomplished by the end of the contract?

ANS: See paragraph C.2, objective of the RFP.

22. What government or business requirements are driving this procurement?

ANS: See paragraph C.1, Background.

23. Section C.2.1 specifically states the IRS wants to establish a Consortium with accredited academic and corporate universities. Why has this restriction been imposed?

ANS: This is not a restriction. It is the government's requirement.

24. Amendment 001 changed Section M. Now only experience with a consortium or "other similar arrangement" seems to be acceptable for credit (i.e. scoring). Does this not also restrict competition? Why has this been imposed?

ANS: The government's intention to evaluate past performance based on demonstrated experience with a consortium or other similar arrangement was included in the initial RFP. The rating of references received was changed. It is routine for the government to evaluate offerors with experience doing those things required by the RFP. Offerors with no relevant work experience will not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably.

25. Request clarity as to the anticipated breakdown of tasks in each program area.

ANS: It is not possible to project which particular tasks within a program area will be ordered more than other tasks. The requirement includes the ability to provide all tasks.

26. Is the IRS interested in the best value offer or in the lowest-priced technically acceptable offer?

ANS: Award will be based on best value to the government, in terms of the technical, past performance and price factors stated.

27. Does training development under any future task orders need to align with TDQAS methodology? Or are vendors expected to also submit their own methodologies?

ANS: See para C.5.1. All training and training related work shall be consistent with the TDQAS and it is included as a Attachment B to the RFP.

28. How are you going to evaluate non-university bidders (e.g., corporations, corporate universities, etc.) with respect to the requirement to be ranked by U.S. News and World Reports or the Gourman Report?

ANS: The accreditation is a requirement in the RFP. It is expected a vendor responding will address how it plans to meet this requirement and will be evaluated in accordance with Section M of the RFP.

29. Please clarify the TDQAS as it relates to the preparation of proposals. Are offerors required to address the TDQAS in their proposals? Is it possible for IRS to assign more accurate, representative maximum order limits?

ANS: The offeror should demonstrate its ability to comply with the TDQAS in its proposal. The minimum and maximum order limits currently reflected in the solicitation cannot be broken down below the program area level.

30. How will the consortium contract interact with the existing Training and Performance Development umbrella contracts?

ANS: The consortium contract(s) will not interact with the umbrella contracts.

31. Will the IRS customer base be the same for the Consortium and for the Training and Performance Development contractors?

ANS: Yes, but they will not compete with each other.

32. Is there funding for the consortium program in FY 00? What is the target award date for the Consortium contracts?

ANS: There is funding in FY 00 for the consortium contract(s). Award is anticipated by September 30, 2000.

33. Will IRS contemplate bringing a contractor in under a MOBIS task order to perform consortium work or related work, particularly human resources consulting and program strategic planning efforts?

ANS: No. A formal contract or contracts will be awarded as a result of this solicitation in accordance with Section M.

34. Will consortium contracts be available to other Treasury bureaus? Other Federal agencies?

ANS: No. However, IRS field activities will be authorized to issue task orders under the contracts.

35. In preparing proposals, are offerors required to submit physically separate, individual proposals (technical, price, past performance) for each program area on which they bid?

ANS: Yes. Each program area offered should stand alone.

36. Is IRS looking to have contractor's geographically located in or near those metropolitan areas where there are IRS service centers?

ANS: Location is irrelevant.

37. How does the IRS contemplate motivating/incentivizing contractors to work together after award? Should offerors address cooperative arrangements in the context of the proposal, or does IRS propose to arrange this on an on-going basis during the task order process? Will contractors be scored on their performance against some set of criteria in the area of cooperation in order to make the consortium work properly?

ANS: See Paragraph C.3 of the solicitation. The IRS believes that this consortium provides unique opportunities for both the service and the contractor to benefit in ways other than monetary. The relationship is analogous to a partnership. Cooperative arrangements should be addressed in a minimum of two ways: past experience in performing similar work and current arrangements that are components of the offeror's ability to satisfy the requirement in the RFP. Past performance is an evaluation factor. The offeror's experience with consortium's should be addressed.

38. The ranking evaluation criterion (US New & World Report, The Gourman Report) is not appropriate for this program. These rankings are based on subjective evaluations and anecdotes that are in no way related to this requirement. Further, it is implied that a higher ranking will be scored more highly, yet it is far from clear that there is a benefit to IRS from a higher ranking. Offers should be evaluated on the basis of information included in the proposal. We recommend that IRS amend the RFP to delete this requirement and evaluation criterion in its entirety.

ANS: The IRS selected these ranking authorities based on familiarity, accessibility and credibility. All evaluations contain some subjectivity. This ranking criterion is appropriate because it is relevant to the requirement.